



STEPHEN M. LINSKY – WARD 2 ALDERMAN

FALL 2010 CONSTITUENT UPDATE

Hello Everyone:

As always, it's wonderful to be able to report to you on my service this past year as your ward representative on the Board of Aldermen. In addition to issuing annual reports and publishing notices in the Newton TAB, I periodically post items, including this report, on the city's website at: <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/constituents.asp>. I also hold monthly constituent office hours at the Newton Senior Center. Below are a few of the more important developments:

Making Use of State Initiatives

Despite having to make significant cuts following the deepest recession since the Great Depression, Governor Patrick has maintained his commitment to local aid while improving infrastructure to better attract and sustain the state's economy. Newton has particularly benefitted by its adoption of two of the Governor's initiatives, the Community Partnership Act and the Green Communities Act (which Newton was among the first communities approved for state funding.) I am pleased to have been able to support these efforts as chair of the Long Range Planning Committee and member of the Finance Committee. While Massachusetts is emerging from the recession sooner than most industrialized states, the state (and Newton by extension) is hardly out of the woods. It took two full years to emerge from the 2001 recession. And the 2008 recession has been far deeper.

Challenges in the Upcoming FY '12 budget and the Need to Adopt More Innovative Approaches

The upcoming city budget for FY' 12 may prove to be one of our most challenging. The mayor has indicated a desire to employ a goals-oriented approach in formulating the operational budget and to initiate a true capital budget. I strongly support these efforts, along with a range of other initiatives. Coupled with alternative budgeting approaches, a number of communities, including the City of Boston, are increasingly employing new technologies, such as adopting applications available on smart phones, to more effectively and efficiently connect residents to the delivery of municipal services. We must be continuously willing to innovate and embrace new and different approaches to how we run nearly every aspect of our city.

Update on Re-Development of the Austin Street Parking Lot

Following input from area residents as part of a visioning process that helped form the basis for the publication of Request for Interest (RFI), and following receipt of responses to the RFI from both for-profit and non-profit developers, the Real Property Reuse Committee has endorsed a request to the mayor to proceed with the 'surplusing' process for the Austin Street municipal parking lot. Once completed, the city would then move to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP). The intention is to retain our village center's amenities to the surrounding neighborhood and ease of use, while creating enhanced public space and the critical mass necessary to better sustain the village's existing commercial base. The Request for Interest (RFI) that was published by the city this summer can be found at: <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/planning/austin/RFI52510doc.pdf>

New Pedestrian Crossing Controls

After many years of persist effort, Newtonville now has three new pedestrian activated controls. Two are currently in place (Walnut/Trowbridge, Crafts/Linwood) and one will soon follow (Washington/Harvard).

I am always interested in hearing from you, whether it is during my annual fall walking tour of the ward, or at any other time at: (617) 796-1701 or: slinsky@newtonma.gov